



Cabinet report

Date	9 MARCH 2023
Title	DETERMINE ACADEMIC YEAR/TERM DATES FOR 2024/2025
Report of	CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, EDUCATION AND LIFELONG SKILLS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The purpose of this paper is to seek approval from the Cabinet on the determination of the pattern of school term and holiday dates for the school year 2024/2025 and to note the outcomes of the consultation process that has been followed.
2. Following a public consultation for the 2019/2020 school year, the Isle of Wight Council introduced a two-week October half term break and used the same approach in the following school year.
3. In Spring 2022, the Council carried out a further consultation with all stakeholders on views of the two-week October half term break. Specifically, respondents were asked to state their preferred length of that break, choosing between three options. After responses had been analysed, schools and professional bodies were asked for comments on proposed term and holiday dates which had been designed using the public consultation response that preferred a two-week October half term break.
4. The setting of the 2024/2025 calendar has not made any changes to the October half term which therefore remains as two weeks.
5. This report provides two options that were subject to consultation regarding the timing of the summer half term holiday. Option one with no changes to previous the year (retention of the May half term) and option two with a slightly later summer half term commencing the first week of June.

RECOMMENDATION

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">6. That Cabinet approves the proposed calendar for term dates 2024/2025 as outlined in Appendix 1, that includes the summer half term holiday commencing 26 May 2025. The recommendation is supported by representative members of the Directorate Consultative Committee (DCM) a professional body group comprising of union delegates. |
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BACKGROUND

7. It is the responsibility of a local authority to schedule a school year which provides the statutory 190 pupil days and 195 teacher days in voluntary controlled and community schools. The structure for delivering this entitlement has been the subject of national and local debate in recent years. Across England, in local authorities and in schools with responsibility for setting their own school year, there are an increasing number of schools that do not use the typical school year of three terms, with one-week half term breaks and a long summer holiday of up to six weeks.
8. Having a balanced school year with regular breaks in the middle and at the end of each term helps to maximise wellbeing and helps schools to plan learning more effectively.
9. Children benefit from good attendance in school; it supports educational achievement and lays the foundation for a positive contribution to society and economic well-being. Properly structured periods of learning and rest help children to remain healthy, enjoy their school time and achieve more. The publication of dates well in advance enables families to plan holidays and arrange childcare so that school attendance need not be compromised.
10. The proposed pattern for term and holiday dates on the Isle of Wight takes account of the last day of term in July 2024 and then provides the best available balanced half terms and holiday periods. There has been agreement with Island schools that one of the non-teaching days is taken on the first day of the autumn term, the remaining four are determined and allocated by the school as they wish.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIC CONTEXT

11. The recommendation in this report links to the Corporate Plan 2021-25 priority which is to work with local communities to maintain and ensure appropriate local school provision. Also raising educational achievement is a priority of the Council as set out in the Council's Corporate Plan. The standardisation of dates as much as possible across schools helps them to plan effectively and supports good attendance.

Responding to climate change and enhancing the biosphere

12. The decision for this report is to confirm the calendar that will apply to the School Year 2024/25. It applies the usual restrictions of 195 days for teacher attendance and 190 days of pupil attendance. Consideration to carbon mitigation and/or climate change was not applicable because the decision to be made is strategic/administrative in nature.

Economic Recovery and Reducing Poverty

13. The school year plans the term and holiday dates calendar. The public consultation carried out in 2022 regarding the Autumn half terms explored the links between the school year and the Island's businesses. The responses received state that the configuration of the school year does have an impact on aspects of business and families' access to holidays. Therefore, the Autumn half term remains the same.

Impact on Young People and Future Generations

14. The decisions the Council makes now not only affect current residents, but may have long term impacts, both positive and negative, on young people and future generations. These impacts may not immediately be apparent or may not emerge for several years or decades. Impacts will be interrelated across the various domains of young people's lives from housing, employment or training, health and the environment.
15. The consultation process invited schools and professional bodies to respond, and these views have been considered in the recommendation in this paper.

Corporate Aims

16. The recommendation in this report directly links to the Corporate Plan 2021-25 priority which is to work with local communities to maintain and ensure appropriate local school provision.

CONSULTATION

17. Schools were invited to comment on their preferred pattern of term dates via an Isle of Wight Council school communication and consultation that ran from 5 December 2022 to 30 January 2023. The consultation received 26 responses.
18. The responses were analysed following the closure of the consultation. The responses from schools and professional bodies are included in Appendix 3.

ANALYSIS

19. With a clear majority within the consultation, the model of school holiday and term dates included in Appendix 1 is recommended featuring a summer half term holiday commencing 26 May 2025. The setting of the 2024/2025 calendar has not made any changes to the October half term which therefore remains as two weeks.

FINANCIAL / BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

20. The school year decides the term and holiday dates calendar; it has no budget implications.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

21. Under section 32 Education Act 2002, the local authority shall determine the dates when the school terms and holidays are to begin and end for community, voluntary controlled or community special schools.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

22. The proposed calendar for 2024/2025 term dates applies to all community, voluntary controlled schools, community special schools. Other local authority maintained schools on the Island routinely utilise the determined calendar. Academies and Free Schools are free to set their own term dates. The proposed calendar is applied across all schools using it in the same way and therefore does not have any impact

on any of the protected characteristics.

OPTIONS

23. Option 1 - To approve the proposed calendar for the term dates 2024/25 as set out in Appendix 1.

Option 2 - To approve an alternative calendar that is set out in Appendix 2.

RISK MANAGEMENT

24. It is a requirement for the local authority to set school term and holiday dates for all its maintained schools, other than Voluntary aided, Foundation and Academy schools, to whom the dates are recommended. If the Council fails to agree term dates, it is failing in its statutory duty to comply with section 32 of the Education Act 2002. There is a risk that schools not under local authority control self-determine term dates creating inconsistency with school holiday patterns. This is out of the local authority control.

The risk of not approving option one is it will impact the GCSE timetable for Secondary schools, it is therefore important the summer half term holiday commences 26 May 2025. If option two was chosen Academies have the option to choose their own term dates, which may have an impact on school transportation and costs.

EVALUATION

25. The proposed calendar was reviewed and has taken into consideration the consultation and change that applied for the 2019/2020 school year. It is considered the proposed pattern in Appendix 1 is the preferred option.

APPENDICES ATTACHED

26. Appendix 1: Proposed 2024/25 school year with usual Summer half-term pattern
Appendix 2: Proposed 2024/25 school year with a later Summer half-term pattern
Appendix 3: Consultation responses from schools and professional bodies

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Contact Point: Ashley Jefferies, Head of Access and Resources, ☎ 0370 779 8948,
e-mail: ashley.jefferies@hants.gov.uk

STEVE CROCKER
Director of Children's Services

CLLR DEBBIE ANDRE
*Cabinet Member for Children's Services,
Education and Lifelong Skills*